

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing customized menu service for a drive-thru customer in a vehicle, the customer making menu selections from a main menu the method comprising the steps of:
  - scanning a unique customer identity code from a machine readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle during a first visit to the drive-thru;
  - creating a customer profile corresponding to said unique customer identity code;
  - recording the user menu selections from the main menu during said first and subsequent visits in said customer profile;
  - scanning said unique identity code from said machine readable identity means during subsequent visits to the drive-thru;
  - retrieving said customer profile corresponding to said unique customer identity code;
  - creating a custom menu from said customer profile; and,
  - displaying said custom menu to the customer during said subsequent visits.
2. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said machine readable identity means comprise a license plate, and said unique customer identity code comprises a license plate number.
3. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said machine readable identity means comprise a machine readable badge.
4. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said machine readable identity means comprise a machine readable bumper sticker.

5. A method as defined by claim 1 further comprising the steps of:  
using the customer menu selections from said first visit to create  
a suggested new item list, and,

displaying said suggested new item list to the customer during  
said second visit.

6. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said step of scanning a  
unique customer identity code further comprises scanning said machine  
readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle using a scanning  
means comprising an electronic sensing device capable of emitting light rays  
5 and receiving reflections of said emitted rays, said electronic sensing device  
being capable of detecting characters.

7. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said step of displaying  
said custom menu comprises displaying said custom menu using display means  
proximate to the main menu.

8. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said method further  
comprises the step of providing a custom marketing offer with said custom  
menu.

9. A method as defined by claim 8 wherein said step of providing a  
custom marketing offer with said custom menu comprises the steps of:

awarding points to the customer based on customer menu  
selections during said first and subsequent visits;

5 storing a total number of said points in said customer profile; and

displaying said total number of points with said custom menu  
during said subsequent visits.

10. A method as defined by claim 8 wherein said step of providing a custom marketing offer with said custom menu comprises offering a discounted purchase price on an item not on said custom menu.

11. A method as defined by claim 1 wherein said method further comprises the step of recording a time value corresponding to the customer menu selections made during said first visit.

12. A method for providing customized menu service to a drive-thru customer in a vehicle, the customer making menu selections from a main menu, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 scanning a license plate number from the customer vehicle with scanning means during a first visit to the restaurant;
- creating a customer profile corresponding to said license plate number;
- recording the user menu selections from the main menu made during said first visit in said customer profile;
- 10 recording a time value corresponding to the time the customer menu selections are made in said customer profile;
- scanning said license plate number from the customer vehicle during each of a plurality of subsequent visits to the drive-thru with said scanning means;
- 15 recording menu selections made by the customer during said each of a plurality of subsequent visits in said customer profile;
- creating a custom menu using the menu selection items stored in said customer profile;
- creating a custom marketing offer for the customer using the menu selection items stored in said customer profile; and,
- 20 displaying said custom menu and said custom marketing offer to the customer during said each of a plurality of subsequent visits to the restaurant.

13. A method for providing a custom menu to a drive-thru customer in a vehicle making menu selections, the method comprising the steps of:

scanning a unique customer identity code from a machine readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle;

5 comparing said customer identity code to a plurality of existing unique customer identity codes on an existing customer list to determine whether said unique customer identity code matches any of said plurality of existing unique customer identity codes;

categorizing the customer as a new customer if said unique  
10 identity code does not match any of said existing unique customer identity codes;

entering said unique customer identity on said existing customer list if the customer is categorized as a new customer;

creating a unique customer profile corresponding to said unique  
15 customer identity code if the customer is categorized as a new customer;

storing the customer menu selections made by said new customer in the customer profile for future retrieval;

categorizing said customer as an existing customer if said unique  
20 customer identity code matches any of said existing unique customer identity codes;

retrieving a customer profile corresponding to said unique customer identity if the customer is categorized as an existing customer;

creating a custom menu from said customer profile if the  
25 customer is categorized as an existing customer, said custom menu comprising previous selection items made by said existing customer;

displaying said custom menu to said existing customer;

recording menu selections made by said existing customer in said  
customer profile; and,

storing said customer profile for said existing customer for future  
30 retrieval.

14. A method as defined by claim 13, wherein said machine readable identity means comprise a license plate.

15. A computer program product for providing a custom menu to a drive-thru customer in a vehicle making menu selections from a main menu, the program product comprising a computer usable medium having machine readable program code embodied in the medium that when executed causes a computer to:

cause scanning means to scan a unique customer identity code from a machine readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle during a first visit to the drive-thru;

create a customer profile corresponding to said unique customer identity code;

record the user's menu selections from the main menu during said first visit in said customer profile;

scan said unique customer identity code from said machine readable identity means during a second visit to the drive-thru;

create a custom menu from said user menu choices stored in said customer profile; and,

display said custom menu to the customer during said second visit to the drive-thru.

16. A computer program product as defined by claim 15 wherein said machine readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle comprises a license plate.

17. A computer program product for providing customized menu service to a restaurant drive-thru customer in a vehicle making menu selections from a main menu, the program product comprising a computer usable medium

having machine readable program code embodied in the medium that when

5 executed causes a computer to:

scan a license plate number from the vehicle during a visit to the restaurant;

create a customer profile corresponding to said scanned license plate number;

10 record the user menu selections from the main menu made during said visit in said customer profile;

scan said license plate number from the vehicle during each of a plurality of subsequent visits to the restaurant;

record menu selections made by the customer during said subsequent visits to the restaurant in said customer profile;

15 create a custom menu from said customer profile, said custom menu comprising menu selection items stored in said customer profile; and,

display said custom menu to the customer during said subsequent visits to the restaurant.

18. A computer program product for providing a custom menu to a drive-thru customer in a vehicle making menu selections, the computer program product utilizing scanning means comprising an electronic sensor for emitting light rays and interpreting images from the reflections of the emitted rays, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having machine readable program code embodied in the medium that when executed causes a computer to:

cause the scanning means to scan a unique customer identity code from a machine readable identity means attached to the customer vehicle;

10 compare said unique customer identity code to a plurality of existing unique customer codes on an existing customer list stored in a data repository connected to the computer to determine whether said unique customer identity code matches any of said plurality of existing unique customer identity codes;

- 15 categorize the customer as a new customer if said unique customer identity code does not match any of said existing unique customer identity codes;  
add said unique customer identity code to said existing customer list if the customer is categorized as a new customer;
- 20 create a customer profile corresponding to said unique customer identity code if the customer is categorized as a new customer;  
record the customer menu selections made by said new customer in said customer profile;  
store said customer profile in said data repository for future  
25 retrieval;  
categorize the customer as an existing customer if said unique customer identity code matches any of said existing unique customer identity codes from said existing customer list;  
retrieve a customer profile corresponding to said unique customer  
30 identity code from said data repository if the customer is categorized as an existing customer;  
create a custom menu comprising previous customer menu selection items stored in said customer profile if said customer is categorized as an existing customer;
- 35 display said custom menu to said existing customer on display means proximate said main menu board; and,  
record the customer menu selections made by said existing customer in said customer profile;  
store said customer profile in said data repository for future  
40 retrieval.

19. A computer program product as defined by claim 18 wherein said machine readable identity means comprise a license plate, and wherein said unique customer identity code comprises a license plate number.